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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

THE NEED TO ADOPT EFFECTIVE MEASURES FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHO ARE VICTIMS OF ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING ARMED CONFLICTS

Letter dated 29 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request, in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an additional item of an important and urgent nature entitled "The need to adopt effective measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of children throughout the world who are victims of especially difficult circumstances, including armed conflicts".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum is attached to this request (see annex).

In view of the important and urgent nature of this item, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States looks forward to receiving the support of Member States and requests that the item be considered by the Third Committee.

(Signed) Fernando REMIREZ de ESTENOZ
Permanent Representative of Cuba
to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of Latin
American and Caribbean States

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

The members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States have proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an additional priority item entitled "The need to adopt effective measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of children throughout the world who are victims of especially difficult circumstances, including armed conflicts".

It is clear that the situation of children in general, and particularly that of children in especially difficult circumstances, is quite alarming. The current international scene offers a wide range of tragic and extreme examples, such as the situation of children trapped in bloody wars.

The latest edition of the UNICEF State of the World's Children report indicates, among other equally distressing facts, that 200,000 children die each week from malnutrition and various curable diseases, while nearly 20 million are physically disabled, confined in refugee camps or homeless.

Yet this is not all, for, as the reports of the special rapporteurs to the Commission on Human Rights make clear, millions of children throughout the world are exploited as a source of cheap labour, while others are victims of trafficking in organs and exploited by child pornography and prostitution.

The progress achieved in the protection of children has been meagre and inadequate. The General Assembly does not include the situation of children as a whole in its sessional agenda. This oversight is difficult to justify when considering the social topics that are of concern to the international community.

It is this thinking that inspired the World Summit for Children, at which participants voiced the need to "give high priority to the rights of children, to their survival and to their protection and development. This will also ensure the well-being of all societies." (World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, para. 19).

The urgency of this item needs no further explanation.